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Letter dated 8 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the continuing failure of the Lebanese Government to act, in accordance with its international obligations, to bring an end to ongoing violations of the Blue Line by the terrorist organization Hizbullah.

In recent weeks, Hizbullah terrorists have repeatedly fired shells at targets on the Israeli side of the Blue Line. These shells have fallen on civilian towns and villages in northern Israel, forcing residents to seek refuge in bomb shelters. On 23 June, a shell fell on the Israeli village of Kfar Yuval in the eastern Galilee, dropping through the roof and into the living room of a private home. The following day, Hizbullah launched another attack, firing a barrage of anti-aircraft shells over parts of the northern Galilee. Burning shrapnel fell in a number of communities, sending people running for cover.

It is clear from these developments that Lebanon is refusing to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council and to fully commit itself to the global counter-terrorism campaign. Lebanon prefers to pay lip service to this effort while at the same time continuing to harbour, support and encourage terrorists and permitting them to build an infrastructure in Lebanese territory, including the accumulation of thousands of Katyusha rockets capable of striking civilian targets inside Israel. Lebanon's duplicitous policy was exemplified by the letter dated 20 June 2002 (A/56/994-S/2002/687) from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations, in which he denied both Hizbullah's terrorist intentions and credible reports that Al-Qaida terrorists are present in Lebanese territory.

Such denials fly in the face of all that is known about Hizbullah and its lengthy and well-documented history of global terrorism, conducted with the active support of the Governments of Syria and Iran. In the nearly two decades since its founding, the organization and its operatives have been involved in numerous terrorist actions, both in the Middle East and beyond, including the bombing of the Multinational Force headquarters in Beirut in 1983, which claimed the lives of 240 United States Marines and 58 French soldiers; the hijacking of a TWA jetliner in June 1985; the

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bombing of the Embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires in 1992; and the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Centre in the same city in 1994.

Hizbullah's terrorist operations across the Blue Line have continued in the past two years, despite Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanese territory and full compliance with resolution 425 (1978), as confirmed by both the Secretary-General and the Security Council. Hizbullah has knowingly endangered civilian communities on both the Israeli and the Lebanese sides of the Blue Line, kidnapped and killed Israeli soldiers, and attempted to lure civilians to meetings under false pretences with the express purpose of taking them hostage. On Monday, in an interview with the newspaper *Asharq al-Awsat*, Sheikh Mohammed Ra'ad, a member of the Lebanese Parliament and a leader of Hizbullah's political faction, said that the Blue Line was a "superpower's demarcation and we don't recognize it".

Hizbullah's support for, and commitment to, acts of terrorism is made clear by the increasingly belligerent statements of the organization's leadership, which include praise for Palestinian suicide bombers and pledges of continued support for terrorist activities targeting Israeli civilians. Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, in a speech on 6 June 2002, said the following regarding Palestinian suicide bombings:

> "The most effective and important weapon that tends to be enormously available, protected, used when needed, and continuously insured, is the act of martyrdom ... It is a very simple action yet it is very efficient ... Unfortunately we all have heard over the past few weeks some officials of the Palestinian Authority tending to present the act of martyrdom as being a reason, which leads to the destruction of the Palestinian people. This means they are trying to say that the act of martyrdom is not only useless, but in addition it causes harm to the national aspect, and this is a very dangerous say. Doubting the legitimacy, morality, and benefits of this weapon must be confronted." (translation taken from http://www.hizbollah.org/english/amin/k2002/k20020618.htm)

These Hizbullah actions come amid a growing number of troubling reports of Al-Qaida activity in Lebanon. In recent years Al-Qaida has established a broad infrastructure in Lebanon, centred mainly in the Ein Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon, but the organization's presence has increased in the last few months as operatives have fled Afghanistan and sought safe haven in Lebanese territory. Al-Qaida's Lebanon operations are headed by Abu Mohammed al-Masri, a terrorist leader who was deeply involved in the plot to attack American and Israeli targets in Jordan in 1999. Al-Qaida has also been affiliated with the Lebanese-Palestinian group Asbat al-Ansar, to which it has provided funding; the leader of Asbat al-Ansar, known as Abu Muhjin, is currently in hiding in Ein Hilweh.

Both the Secretary-General and the Security Council have affirmed the need to respect the integrity of the Blue Line and the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon to ensure a calm environment in southern Lebanon. The Secretary-General, in his statement to the Security Council on 20 May 2002, reaffirmed that any attack across the Blue Line, including in the Shab'a Farms area, constitutes a violation of Security Council resolutions. For its part, the Security Council has confirmed Israel's full compliance with resolution 425 (1978) and has called upon the Government of Lebanon to fulfil its remaining obligations under that and subsequent resolutions.

Lebanon has yet to respond to these calls and currently stands in breach of international law and Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1310 (2000), 1337 (2001), 1365 (2001) and 1391 (2002), which call for the restoration of effective Lebanese authority in the area. The Government of Lebanon is also in violation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and established principles of international law, which clearly call upon all States to refrain from providing any support, whether active or passive, to all persons or entities involved in terrorist acts, and to ensure that their territory is not used as a base for cross-border attacks. Lebanon has also failed to comply with other provisions of that resolution, most significantly by refusing to freeze the assets of Hizbullah or close down the offices of the rejectionist Palestinian organizations that operate in Beirut.

No amount of finger-pointing can blur the undeniable fact that the cause of instability along the Blue Line is the abject failure of the Lebanese Government to fulfil its responsibilities under relevant Security Council resolutions and international law and its continuing refusal to resolve disputes by peaceful means, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. Were Lebanon, rather than engaging in apportioning blame and diversionary tactics, to simply meet the obligations required of all States to prevent their territory from serving as a base for terrorist attacks, tensions in the area would be immeasurably defused. It is incumbent upon the international community to make clear to Lebanon, as well as to the Governments of Iran and Syria, that it will not tolerate their continued support for illegal cross-border attacks that jeopardize international peace and security.

The present letter is submitted as a follow-up to previous letters concerning the dangerous situation in southern Lebanon caused by the illegal attacks perpetrated by Hizbullah across the Blue Line, dated 10 April 2002 (A/56/913-S/2002/374), 3 April 2002 (A/56/899-S/2002/348), 2 April 2002 (A/56/898-S/2002/345), 21 March 2002 (A/56/884-S/2002/301), 24 January 2002 (A/56/793-S/2002/115), 17 January 2002 (A/56/778-S/2002/79), 24 October 2001 (A/56/507-S/2001/1012), 5 October 2001 (A/56/443-S/2001/942), 6 July 2001 (A/56/161-S/2001/673), 16 April 2001 (S/2001/367), 16 February 2001 (A/55/792-S/2001/142), 6 February 2001 (A/55/767-S/2001/111), 26 November 2000 (S/2000/1121), 23 October 2000 (S/2000/1011), 19 October 2000 (S/2000/1002) and 7 October 2000 (S/2000/969).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative